

MEDIA RELATIONS OVERVIEW



UCLA HEALTH SCIENCES

MEDIA RELATIONS

MANAGING THE MEDIA

- **Topics covered in this presentation will include:**
 - **Understanding the Media**
 - **Key Message Development**
 - **Conducting Media Interviews**
 - **Potential Media Situations**

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA



UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA

Why the Media is Important

- Good relations with media outlets are critical because they interpret and frame public debate on topics
- If you don't frame your story, the media may do it for you
 - The media is not a public relations vehicle; good journalism requires telling both sides of the story

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA

Why the Media is Important

- The emergence of the Internet allows news to travel instantaneously
 - More competition to be first
 - More likelihood of errors
- Some audiences form their primary opinions on issues based on what they read and see in the media

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA



What Reporters Want

- Reporters want to interview a spokesperson who is articulate, informative and responsive to their calls and deadlines
- Reporters can be impatient; often they want a 10 to 20-second quote highlighting your point of view; facts
- Reporters are not interested in making your organization/issue look good, nor being told what they should include in their stories

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA

What Reporters Want

 Reporters are looking for the following elements when deciding which stories to cover:

-  Conflict/scandal
-  Trends
-  Impact on audience
-  Timeliness
-  Human interest
-  Novelty/drama - the unusual
-  Locality
-  News you can see - strong visuals

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA

● Print vs. Electronic

■ Print

- More in-depth
- Specialized reporters – more knowledgeable
- “Longer” deadlines
- Flexibility
- Less visual

■ Electronic

- Immediacy
- Visual
- Tight deadlines
- Style/appearance over substance
- Short segments

KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT



KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT



Why Use Key Messages?

- Key messages are the three main points you want your audience to understand
- Before any interview, work with your public information officer or other appropriate staff to develop these three messages

KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

What is a Key Message?

A short sound bite that...

- Conveys important information in a clear, concise fashion (“sound bite” length)
- Helps create a unified voice, delivering messages that are consistent and timely
- Increases the likelihood of communicating messages that promote the issue in a positive light
- Can be modified to address the concerns of multiple target audiences

KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT



How to Develop a Key Message

- Identify your audience. Who are they? What do they like? What motivates them? Why should they care about your message?

KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

How to Develop a Key Message

- **What are the three main points you are trying to convey to your audience? It must be brief and easy to understand.**
 - **Example: “We are doing everything we can to make sure that this situation doesn’t happen again.”**

KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider When Developing Messages

- Use interesting (and accurate) facts and figures to support your message and establish credibility
 - Example: “In X years, we have performed this operation Y number of times and the system has always worked well.”
- Keep your three messages short and quotable

KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

Points to Consider When Developing Messages

- **PRACTICE!** Review your three message points before speaking to the media
- Time them to make sure they are 10- to 20-second “sound bites”
- All designated spokespeople should know the three key messages and strive to use them whenever speaking to the media
- “Bridge” or transition to your key message whenever possible

KEY MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT



Sample Bridging Statements

- “The bottom line is...”
- “The key thing to remember is...”
- “I can’t speculate on that, but what I can tell you is...”
- “On the contrary...”
- “And that is just a reaffirmation of ...”
- “I’m not the right person to answer that question, but I can refer you to the expert. What I can tell you is...”
- “What is really important is...”

CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS



CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Working with the Media

- Be honest and accessible when dealing with the media. Media calls of all kinds deserve some response, even if the response is an explanation of why something cannot be discussed.
- Prepare for every interview –
 - Know the reporter/publication
 - Anticipate any controversies - prepare appropriate responses ahead of time

CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS







Working with the Media

- Give all background material and information before interview starts
- Approach an interview in a positive and assertive manner
- Control the interview – engage the reporter and ask questions to get a feel for the story
- Be brief – and keep it simple

CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Important Interview Pointers





DO

-  Let the interviewer finish each question before you begin answering
-  Begin your response with one of your three key messages when possible
-  Remain calm, courteous and confident regardless of a reporter's tone and manner
-  Be responsive to questions, but make sure to deliver the three key messages

CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Important Interview Pointers






DO

-  Always look for opportunities to “bridge” back to the three key messages
-  Show empathy and understanding for those who are adversely affected by difficult situations
-  For a taped radio or television interview, don’t hesitate to ask for a “do-over” if you feel you haven’t expressed yourself clearly – stop in mid-sentence if necessary
-  Follow-up with the reporter as soon as possible if you offered to provide more information, or if you feel you need to clarify misunderstood points

CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Important Interview Pointers







DON'T

-  Talk off-the-record with a reporter; if you don't want to see it in print the next day, don't say it
-  Try to fill the silence – when you've made your point, **STOP TALKING**
-  Say “no comment” – it is a no-win answer; if you don't answer, you look guilty
-  Fall for a reporter's hypothetical question or speculate on what someone might say or think
-  Get too comfortable – be prepared for **ANY** question, **ANY** time

CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Important Interview Pointers

DON'T

-  Respond with “yes” or “no” answers – make your “sound bite” a complete response
-  Use words from a reporter’s hostile question in your response
-  Use slang, jargon or acronyms
-  Attempt humor – it may be taken the wrong way
-  Take it personally if a reporter is brusque, or even rude
-  Be late to an interview

CONDUCTING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

REPORTER TRAPS

- Irrelevancy — A question that has no bearing on your agenda
- Speculation — The reporter asks you to predict the future or address a hypothetical situation
- A or B Dilemma — Reporter asks you to choose between two or more options or scenarios
- Absent Party Ploy — The reporter attempts to create controversy by getting you to lock horns with an adversary
- Loaded Preface — The question begins with a premise that is negative or incorrect
- Machine Gun Questioning — This is an issue of pacing, rather than actual wording

Don't Fall Into These Traps!

SUMMARY: INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Be comfortable with your three key messages**
- **Always use all three key messages frequently and forcefully**
- **Use the name of your organization repeatedly to make sure it gets in story**
- **Avoid alienating the reporter**
- **Be yourself**
- **State your main points within first 20 seconds**

SUMMARY: INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Answer what you want--not what is asked**
- **Use conversational language everybody will understand**
- **Keep a positive approach to turn around negative questions**
- **Don't over-hype**
- **Don't "wing it"**
- **Make a good impression with good body language**
MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEDIA ACCESS !